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JONATHAN EDWARDS ON TYPOLOGY
AS LANGUAGE

To discuss typology seems anachronistic. The heyday of academic interest in the discipline of typology seems to have passed, certainly in American Studies and Literature. Here and there an article appears but the topic does not attract nearly as much scholarly interest as in the 1970's.[1] Regarding Jonathan Edwards' typology much work has been done and several basics have been established: that Edwards' typological understanding of the Old and the New Testament is quite traditional and orthodox, that his extension of the typological principle to the natural world opens the way to the symbolism of the Transcendentalists and in its implications subverts Edwards' theological convictions (in one interpretation), or that it is an admirable broadening of the understanding of divine communication and the believer's participation in the dynamic system of relationships between God and all created beings (in another interpretation). Beyond these, however, some recent scholarship has brought Edwards' typology into new contexts and examined it from different perspectives and it seems that the topic is still worth discussing. There have been a few ventures into a consideration of Edwards' thought and

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[1] For literary scholarship in particular, Ken Minkema observes that it does not by far match the intensity of theological and historical approaches to Edwards. See Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47.4 (2004), ¡http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/47/47-4/47-4-pp659-687_JETS.pdf¿, 677 [accessed 23 January 2012].

writings from the perspective of contemporary literary and critical theory,[2] but generally the combination of critical theory and early American texts is a rare one.[3]

This paper joins the dwindling ranks of those arguments for a combination of Edwards and literary theory and attempts to make a case for the relevance of such a combination in the general contours of Edwards' understanding of typology as language. To that end, some well-known typological texts are first examined closely and reconsidered for themes which might be implied, and these are finally connected to some of the fundamental issues regarding language and representation as interpreted by Jacques Derrida. There are other literary theoretical approaches, which could yield profitable readings of Edwards; reading Edwards through a deconstructive lens is certainly not the only perspective that can be chosen among the more recent literary theoretical trends, and it has its limits. On the other hand, it highlights certain important aspects of Edwards' texts and places them in new contexts, making Edwards relevant to contemporary critical debates.

Edwards regards typology as an important principle of Scriptural exegesis, and in notebooks such as "Harmony of Old and New Testaments" or in "Types of the Messiah," he finds Old Testament prefigurations of the events of the New Testaments and of the Christian era, or spiritual meaning of various ceremonies and ordinances described in the Bible. However, he finds that the same interpretative principle is to be applied also to the created world, to objects and events in nature and general human experience. He argues: "as the system of nature and the system of revelation are both divine works, so both are in different senses a divine word. Both are the voice of God to intelligent creatures, a manifestation and declaration of himself to mankind."[4] Of course he believes that "the Book of Scripture is the interpreter of the Book of Nature."[5] The Book of Nature is "writ-

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[2] Richard C. De Prospo, *Theism in the Discourse of Jonathan Edwards* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London, Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1985); Stephen Daniel, *The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Wayne Lesser, "Jonathan Edwards: Textuality and the Language of Man," *Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards*, ed. William J. Scheick (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980) 287-304; Jennifer L. Leader, " 'In Love with the Image': Transitive Being and Typological Desire in Jonathan Edwards," *Early American Literature* 41.2 (2006): 153-181, *Academic Search Complete*, http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=fc7b4826-0871-4d20-832b-4c8ced05018%40sessionmgr11&vid=12 &hid=104, [accessed 2 July 2012].

[3] This is not surprising—not only because Early Americanists mostly do not tend to be favorably inclined toward continental philosophy of the last decades, but also because postmodern literary interpretations are typically associated with late eighteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts. Literary critics quoted here, Paul de Man and J. Hillis Miller, focus mostly on 19th and 20th literature. On the other hand, Edwards as an Early Modern thinker and a Christian Philosopher is part and parcel of the Western metaphysical tradition which Derrida analyzes. Paul de Man's interest in Rousseau, Edwards' contemporary, for example, also suggests that such combination is not impossible. A more thorough methodological reflection cannot be presented here; I have attempted it elsewhere.

[4] "Miscellanies," no. 1340, WJE 13:374.

[5] "Images," no. 156, WJE 11:106.

ten" in the "language" of types: "Types are a certain sort of language, as it were, in which God is wont to speak to us."[6]

In itself, this is not new. The understanding of nature as a book was commonplace and has a long tradition in Christianity. Puritan typology developed in connection with other traditions, such as emblematics and meditations on the creatures, in which the notion of a spiritual meaning of the created world was prominent. There was also the Puritan penchant for discovering divine providences in the world and in the events of life and examples of deliberate "spiritualizing" of nature, in other words, drawing spiritual lessons from the course of nature and human activities.[7] Edwards, writing down arguments for his natural typology, is perfectly convinced that such endeavor has a biblical mandate, that it is theologically sound and rationally justifiable, and yet he senses that his convictions will be met with suspicion, as if he was advocating some unusual practices. Edwards' defense of his theory against the anticipated criticism, as he lays it down in the "Types" notebook, reveals some of the issues, which are at stake in natural typology. In one perspective, the main difficulty is epistemological, in another perspective, it has to do with representation in language.

The passages in which Edwards explains his typological theory are interesting and deserve to be considered closely. Edwards believes that the Scripture and the created world are full of types which point to their spiritual fulfillment, to spiritual truths which the believer might discover through them. In fact, it is the believer's task to understand the types which are given in Scripture and to search for more types both in the Bible and in nature. This is the key argument of the "Types" notebook, and it is also mentioned in the "Types of the Messiah." In "Types" Edwards writes:

> When we are sufficiently instructed that all these things [in the Old Testament] were typical and had their spiritual signification, it would be on some accounts as unreasonable to say that we must interpret no more of them than the Scripture has interpreted for us, and than we are told the meaning of in the New Testament, as it would be to say that we must interpret prophecy, or prophetical visions and types, no further than the Scripture has interpreted it to our hand.[8]

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[6] "Types", WJE 11:151.

[7] Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Mason I. Lowance, *The Language of Canaan: Metaphor and Symbol in New England from the Puritans to the Transcendentalists* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1980), 26.

[8] WJE 11:146–147.

Note that this implies that the believer needs to interpret and make decisions regarding the meaning of types and their status.

Secondly, the believer must also search for types in the natural world. Throughout his life Edwards kept adding entries to his list of natural types in the notebook "Images of Divine Things": the silkworm is a type of Christ because it gives men clothes just as Christ clothes the believers with his righteousness, the snake lurking to devour its prey represents the devil lurking for the sinner, the invention of the telescope is a type of the approaching millennium. In the accompanying notebook on the "Types," Edwards declares jubilantly:

> I believe that the whole universe, heaven and earth, air and seas, and the divine constitution and history of the holy Scriptures, be full of images of divine things, as full as a language is of words; and that the multitude of those things that I have mentioned are but a very small part of what is really intended to be signified and typified by these things: but that there is room for persons to be learning more and more of this language and seeing more of that which is declared in it to the end of the world without discovering all.[9]

The metaphor of natural typology as language seems to have been particularly felicitous in Edwards' view for he pursues its implications as he explains the rules which should make typology a sound discipline and guard it from turning into an exercise of human fancy. In this important passage, Edwards writes:

> Types are a certain sort of language, as it were, in which God is wont to speak to us. And there is, as it were, a certain idiom in that language which is to be learnt the same that the idiom of any language is, viz. by good acquaintance with the language, either by being naturally trained up in it, learning it by education (but that is not the way in which corrupt mankind learned divine language), or by much use and acquaintance together with a good taste or judgment, by comparing one thing with another and having our senses as it were exercised to discern it (which is the way that adult persons must come to speak any language, and in its true idiom, that is not their native tongue).
>
> Great care should be used, and we should endeavor to be well and thoroughly acquainted, or we shall never understand [or] have a right notion of the idiom of the language. If we go to interpret divine types

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[9] WJE 11:152.

without this, we shall be just like one that pretends to speak any language that han't thoroughly learnt it. We shall use many barbarous expressions that fail entirely of the proper beauty of the language, that are very harsh in the ears of those that are well versed in the language.

God han't expressly explained all the types of Scriptures, but has done so much as is sufficient to teach us the language.[10]

Edwards intends this passage as a defense of his typological beliefs; he wishes to show prudence and caution to make clear that he is no enthusiast dangerously mistaking his imaginations for divine revelation, as he clearly seems to expect (the previous entry from "Types" quoted here begins: "I expect by very ridicule and contempt to be called a man of a very fruitful brain and copious fancy, but they are welcome to it."[11]).

Upon closer examination, however, Edwards' defense raises more questions than it answers. Some of the weak points become apparent immediately. First of all, Edwards' phrasing is rather vague. What precisely are those "barbarous expressions" or who determines the criteria of "a good taste"? Edwards offers no hint of an explanation. Secondly, although true spiritual understanding of types is available only to the regenerate, apparently even their perception of the divine in nature can be wrong, if their typological skills need to be trained and exercised. These points tend to increase the difficulties which modern readers have with Edwards' theory and which Edwards himself anticipated among his contemporaries, i.e. that the boundary between true typological discernment and mere human fancy is dangerously insecure, or in other words, that the distinction between good use of the language of typology and "barbarous expressions" rests, ultimately, solely on the believer's personal decision.[12]

Importantly, such difficulties of Edwards' typological theory are not diminished by the paradigm of language which he employs to explain it. It will be now useful to look at Edwards' understanding of language elsewhere in his writings because it contains some interesting tensions which, when considered alongside his typology, complicate his typological theory even more. When Edwards explains that typology is a kind of language, what views on language are implied? On the one hand, Edwards is confident of the communicative role of language

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[10] "Types," WJE 11:151.

[11] Ibid., 152.

[12] This article pursues the implications of Edwards' metaphor of typology as a language and consequently the problem of subjectivity in typology is not discussed here in greater detail. Nevertheless, the reader will find it implicitly present throughout this text. Subjectivity is a persistent theme in considerations of Edwards' typology and I have explored it elsewhere.

and its referential and epistemological accuracy. He is convinced that language follows certain structures of the human mind. First, Edwards claims that there is a direct connection between language and sensation in the case of simple ideas:

> Sensation. Self-evidence. Things that we know by immediate sensation, we know intuitively, and they are properly self-evident truths: as, grass is green, the sun shines, honey is sweet. When we say that grass is green, all that we can be supposed to mean by it is, that in constant course, when we see grass, the idea of green is excited with it; and this we know self-evidently.[13]

Further, Edwards claims that "many of our universal ideas are not arbitrary. The tying of ideas together in genera and species is not merely the calling of them by the same name, but such a union of them that the consideration of one shall naturally excite the idea of others."[14] This natural association of ideas is even reflected in the structure of language in the names of mixed modes, as Edwards writes in the following argument:

> As there is great foundation in nature for those abstract ideas which we call universals, so there is great foundation in the common circumstances and necessities of mankind and the constant method of things proceeding, for such a tying of simple modes together to the constituting such mixed modes. This appears from the agreement of languages, for language is very much made up of the names of mixed modes, and we find that almost all those names in one language have names that answer to them in other languages. The same mixed mode has a name given to it by most nations; whence it appears that most of the inhabitants of the earth have agreed upon putting together the same simple modes into mixed ones, and in the same manner. The learned and polished have indeed many more than others, and herein chiefly it is that languages do not answer one to another.[15]

The type has for Edwards, according to some interpreters, precisely this quality: the connection between the type and its antitype is thought to be direct and straightforward, as in the case of names of mixed modes or simple ideas. Perry Miller, for example, writes that "the beauty of a type was exactly that, if it existed

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[13] "The Mind," no. 19, WJE 6:346.
[14] "The Mind," no. 43, WJE 6:361.
[15] "The Mind," no. 41, WJE 6:359-360.

at all, it needed only to be seen, not argued,"[16] in other words its effect would be the same as that of the name of a simple idea. And Wilson Kimnach expresses a similar thought in a different context: the type "could be both true (according to the analogy of the world) and real (according to the evidence of the senses)."[17] To regenerate perception, at least, the natural type would provide a similar certainty as a simple idea.

On the other hand, Edwards shares Locke's wariness toward an overly simplistic understanding of language.[18] Similarly to the *Essay on Human Understanding*, Edwards argues that the connection between words and ideas is arbitrary and the way in which words are linked together does not necessarily reflect the way ideas themselves are linked:

> Words. We are used to apply the same words a hundred different ways; and ideas being so much tied and associated with the words, they lead us into a thousand real mistakes. For where we find that the words may be connected, the ideas being by custom tied with them, we think that the ideas may be connected likewise, and applied everywhere and in every way as the words.[19]

This particularly jeopardizes the communicative function of language and its epistemological reliability. In such context, Edwards' attempt to use language as a model of typology runs into difficulties.

Any time discourse relates to spiritual matters the case is even more problematic. There is an interesting tension in Edwards' writings between the human and the divine element in language. On the one hand, Edwards reasons that language originated from man's necessity to refer to material things and that reference to spiritual subjects was derived from its primary use:

> The reason why the names of spiritual things are all, or most of them, derived from the names of sensible or corporeal ones, as "imagination," "conception," "apprehend," etc., is because there was no other way of making others readily understand men's meaning when they first signified things by sounds, than by giving of them the names of

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[16] Perry Miller, "Introduction," *Images or Shadows of Divine Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 26.

[17] Wilson Kimnach, "Editor's Introduction", *Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723*, WJE 10:230.

[18] It is not my intention to repeat Miller's overly Lockean reading of Edwards which has long been counterbalanced by scholars who have pointed out idealist and other aspects of Edwards' thought. In this particular point, however, the connection to Locke's *Essay* is unmistakable.

[19] "The Mind," no. 18, WJE 6:345-346.

things sensible to which they had an analogy. They could thus point it
out with the finger, and so explain themselves as in sensible things.[20]

At the same time, Edwards holds that God himself has condescended to communicate to mankind in this indirect way: "And it was the manner in those ancient times to deliver divine instructions in general in symbols and emblems, and
in their speeches and discourses to make use of types and figures and enigmatical speeches, into which holy men were led by the Spirit of God. This manner of
delivering wisdom was originally divine."[21] Implied in these two passages is an
argument for an essentially figurative nature of metaphysical language, both as
direct divine communication and as human reference to transcendental matters.
This highlights a couple more paradoxical views in Edwards' theory.

On the one hand, Edwards argues that the purpose of typology is to communicate spiritual knowledge; indeed, this is the highest purpose of all communication:
"No speech can be any means of grace, but by conveying knowledge. Otherwise
the speech is as much lost as if there had been no man there, and he that spoke, had
spoken only into the air."[22] On the other hand, Edwards seems to believe that divine communication must necessarily be—to a degree—incomprehensible. Hence
his argument on the "enigmatical speeches" as "originally divine." The following
statement in the "Types of Messiah" brings the understanding of divine communication into an interesting context:

> Thus when future things were made known in visions, the things that
> were seen were not the future things themselves, but some other things
> that were made use of as shadows, symbols or types of the things . . .
> the prophecies are given forth in allegories, and the things foretold
> spoken of not under the proper names of the things them[selves], but
> under the names of other things that are made use of in the prophecy
> as symbols or types of the things foretold.[23]

And even more clearly when Edwards elaborates on the metaphor of type as
shadow in his "Notes on Scripture," no. 288:

> *Hebrews 10:1.* "The law having a shadow of good things to come, and
> not the very image of the things." Here a shadow is distinguished from
> images or pictures, as being a more imperfect representation of the

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[20] "The Mind," no. 23, WJE 6:349.
[21] "Types of the Messiah", WJE 11:193.
[22] *The Importance and Advantage of a Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth*, WJE 22:88.
[23] WJE 11:192,193.

things represented by it. The types of the Old Testament are compared to this kind of representations of things, not only here, but *Hebrews 8:5* and *Colossians 2:17*, which fitly resemble them on several accounts.

The shadow of a thing is an exceeding imperfect representation of it, and yet has such a resemblance that it has a most evident relation to the thing, of which it is the shadow. Again, shadows are dark resemblances; though there be a resemblance, yet the image is accompanied with darkness, or hiding of the light. The light is beyond the substance, so that it is hid. So was it with the types of the Old Testament; they were obscure and dark. The light was beyond the substance; the light that was plainly to reveal gospel things came after Christ, the substance of all ancient types. The shadow was accompanied with darkness and obscurity; gospel things were then hid under a veil.[24]

Conceived as shadow, the function of the type is to *hide* the substance. (It must be recalled that Edwards' first title of his typological notebook was "Shadows of Divine Things."[25]) This stands in direct contrast to the previous arguments on the importance of communicating knowledge. There is thus a certain tension in Edwards' understanding of the human and the divine element in language: on the one hand, reference to spiritual things in language is a sort of second-order language, derived by analogy, on the other hand, this manner of communicating spiritual mysteries is originally divine.

Edwards' reflections on language must be understood not only in the context of his engagement with Locke's *Essay* but also in the context of Puritan attitudes to rhetoric and figurative use of language and their struggle to distinguish typological exegesis from allegorical interpretation.[26] While typology was believed to be part of God's revelation in Scripture, allegorical interpretation was treated with great caution and reservation. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski's summary of the position of Samuel Mather is illustrative: "types differ from arbitrary similes and comparisons (such as the comparison of the union of Christ and the Church to marriage) by reason of their divine institution to foreshadow Christ and his benefits, and from parables and allegories by reason of their historical reality."[27] From a different angle, the Puritan attitude toward type and allegory belongs also to the wider context of their understanding of rhetoric and its connection to homiletics.

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[24] WJE 15:247-248.
[25] See WJE:11:51 n. 5.
[26] See Kimnach, "Introduction", 3-41 and 180-258 for a discussion of rhetorical and homiletic influences on Edwards.
[27] Lewalski, *Poetics*, 124.

The Reformed tradition, with its emphasis on the literal text, meant that tropes were understood "as God's chosen formulation of his revealed truth which man must strive to understand rightly."[28] Clearly, the difficulty that the Puritan tradition had with rhetoric lay in distinguishing properly between the uses of language and employing rhetorical devices only within the limits felt to be appropriate, using rhetoric as a tool in the service of homiletic goals. For this reason, too, it was so important to distinguish between types and human allegories and to define how types could be correctly discovered and interpreted so that God's Word would not be thwarted by human invention.

There are elements in Edwards' understanding of language and of typology which reveal affinity to the tradition of Puritan reflections on of rhetoric and typology.[29] He is convinced that types cannot be reduced to, or mistaken for, mere human invention: he articulates his typological ideas in contrast to the expected objection that he is "a man of a very fruitful brain and copious fancy." He warns that "persons are deceived by the use of figurative and metaphorical expressions" when they mistake what is "only an idea in the imagination" for true knowledge and experience of spiritual things.[30] He wishes, again in a rather Lockean moment, to "extricate all questions from the least confusion or ambiguity of words, so that the ideas shall be left naked."[31]

However, to take these points as an outline of Edwards' attitude toward language and its rhetorical uses would be misleading. Such arguments are perhaps inevitable and necessary and certainly the basic assumption that underlies these efforts—that it is possible to determine when a meaning of an expression is to be understood literally and when it is metaphoric, and in what way it is metaphoric and how it can be interpreted—is inevitable and at the core of perhaps all human thinking about language in general. What is at stake here is, of course, the issue of representation, and that is why it also makes sense for Edwards to explain typology as a language. Naturally Edwards is assuming that it is possible to make a distinction between those instances of language when meaning is communicated directly and when it is figurative. In another perspective: he is assuming that the

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[28] Lewalski, *Poetics*, 77.

[29] This is not meant to imply that the Puritan tradition is the sole context for interpreting Edwards' typological thought. Edwards was engaged in issues which were most pressing in his own times, responding to deist claims and to moral sense philosophy, for example. The purpose of this article is not to discuss Edwards' intellectual environment in its complexity; in a discussion of Edwards' typology, however, it is necessary to note that his typological theory shares some presuppositions with the Puritan tradition.

[30] Sermon on II Corinthians 13: 5; quoted in Miller, "Introduction", 31-32. At this point this 1735 sermon has not been edited by the Jonathan Edwards Center. The transcript can be found in *Sermons, Series II, 1735*, WJEO 50, listed as 368. Sermon on II Cor. 13:5 (1735).

[31] "Cover-Leaf Memoranda," no. 7, WJE 6:193.

language of theology can demarcate those instances in which language is rhetorical, figurative and does not represent "correctly," to designate them as such and separate them from the non-rhetorical; in other words that it is possible, to distinguish between the type and the trope, that perennial issue of historical typology and exegesis. But rather than a solution, Edwards' thought and writings contain a dynamic tension between the possibility for a determined meaning in language and the ever recurring realization that language does not simply transport meaning but also resists users' efforts to determine meaning, to determine even the context in which meaning could be determined.

This last is Jacques Derrida's argument regarding the iterability of the linguistic mark. To highlight a point of connection between the implications of Edwards' typological theory and the concerns of postmodern approaches to language, it is necessary to introduce a brief excursus into some basic ideas of at least one representative of the latter. Derrida has argued that the conception of language in Western thought has developed within a particular historico-metaphysical epoch which he terms "logocentrism,"[32] based on the "determination of the meaning of being in general as *presence*"[33] and, ultimately, also on the identity of language and meaning.[34] He argues that inherent in the epoch of logocentrism is a conception of language as primarily *spoken* language. Writing is consequently considered secondary: "The epoch of the logos thus debases writing considered as mediation of mediation and as a fall into the exteriority of meaning" while in the phonocentric conception (language as speech), the "signified has at any rate an immediate relationship with logos in general."[35] Writing has two main predicates: absence (it functions in the absence of the sender and of the receiver) and iterability (both repetition and difference, "the possibility of every mark to be repeated and still to function as a meaningful mark in new contexts that are cut off entirely from

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[32] "The totality of the great epoch covered by the history of metaphysics, and in a more explicit and more systematically articulated way to the narrower epoch of Christian creationism and infinitism when these appropriate the resources of Greek conceptuality" (Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 13.

[33] *Of Grammatology*, 12.

[34] Consequently, Derrida argues regarding the Saussurian concept of the sign that "the semiological or, more specifically, linguistic 'science' cannot therefore hold on to the difference between signifier and signified—the very idea of the sign—without the difference between sensible and intelligible, certainly, but also not without retaining, more profoundly and more implicitly, and by the same token the reference to a signified able to 'take place' in its intelligibility, before its 'fall,' before any expulsion into the exteriority of the sensible here below. As the face of pure intelligibility, it refers to an absolute logos to which it is immediately united. This absolute logos was an infinite creative subjectivity in medieval theology: the intelligible face of the sign remains turned toward the word and the face of God" (*Of Grammatology*, 13).

[35] Ibid., 13, 15.

the original context, the 'intention to communicate' of the original maker of the mark," in the words of Hillis Miller[36]). In opposition to the logocentric view of language, Derrida holds that these two traits of the classical concept of writing apply to all language and that consequently language should be primarily understood as writing.[37] In a critique of J. L. Austin's theory of speech acts in *How to Do Things with Words*, Derrida argues that writing cannot be subsumed under communication and that iterability, as one of its essential characteristics, carries with itself the impossibility of determining context. When Austin thus excludes figurative language, literature and jokes, from "normal" use of language (and from his theory) and calls them "parasitic" (in a move not unlike Locke's, it might be added), Derrida shows how Austin's own theory of speech acts subverts this distinction and depends, in fact, on the principle of iterability—and thus consequently reintroduces the very ambiguities which Austin wishes to bracket from his theory. For Derrida, the conditions for such "parasitic" aspects of language are a possibility always inherent in all language and they cannot therefore be "excluded" from consideration.[38]

Connected to Derrida's understanding of language as writing is his questioning of the borders between philosophy and literature or metaphorics in general. In "White Mythology" where he discusses metaphor in philosophical text, Derrida argues that the originary sense becomes metaphor only when philosophy puts it in circulation. Metaphor in philosophical discourse then dissipates itself through the wearing down of individual metaphors. Having passed from the physical to the metaphysical, the originary sense is forgotten; philosophy thus performs double erasure: the originary sense is forgotten and the first shift from the originary sense to the metaphysical sense is also forgotten. Though forgotten, the originary stage nonetheless remains active. But if philosophy wishes to classify its metaphors, to define philosophical metaphor, it becomes apparent that it cannot control philosophical metaphorics from the outside by any philosophical concept of metaphor, for

> metaphor has been issued from a network of philosophemes which themselves correspond to tropes or to figures, and these philosophemes are contemporaneous to or in systematic solidarity with these tropes or figures. This . . . layer of 'primary' philosophemes . . . cannot be dominated. It cannot dominate itself, cannot be dominated by

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[36] Hillis J. Miller, *Speech Acts in Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 78.

[37] Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.*, trans. Samuel Weber, Jeffrey Mehlman, Alan Bass (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 10.

[38] Derrida, *Limited*, 57.

what it itself has engendered, has made to grow on its own soil, sup-
ported on its own base. . . . If one wished to conceive and to class all
the metaphorical possibilities of philosophy, one metaphor, at least,
always would remain excluded, outside the system: the metaphor, at
the very least, without which the concept of metaphor could not be
constructed . . . the metaphor of metaphor.[39]

Locke's critique of the dangers of rhetoric in his *Essay* might be said to at-
tempt precisely this, which Derrida holds impossible, to demarcate metaphor in
the discourse of philosophy, to control it, even to get rid of it. But his condemna-
tion of rhetoric is itself, as is well known, full of figures of speech; moreover as
Paul de Man argues, "when Locke then develops his own theory of words and
language, what he constructs turns out to be in fact a theory of tropes."[40] It has
been suggested that there are some points in Edwards' theory where Edwards,
too, seems to rely on a possibility of determining the difference between the lan-
guage of theology and philosophy and between a figurative, rhetorical uses of
language, where he seems to assume that the discourse of philosophy can con-
trol its tropes and metaphors. But perhaps in Edwards these points are secondary
when compared to the many ambiguities he creates and the open ends for which
he does not account.

The vagueness of Edwards' rules for learning the language of typology is not
the core of the issue; it is merely symptomatic of a deeper problem. If the language
of typology is to be learned by use and practice, it implies that there is a possibility
for a situation when the self, even the believing self, "speaks" a type and does not
yet know whether he or she has discovered a genuine type or if it is a false type,
a mere product of the believer's human imagination. It is certainly a passing mo-
ment, and the more the believer is trained in the language of typology, the surer he
or she becomes in typological interpretation; nevertheless, the possibility is there
and can be understood as a fundamental insecurity of the typological project, a
destabilizing dimension which might not be always realized but can never be re-
moved. To link this to Derrida's terminology, it could be said that this moment
of indeterminacy is a manifestation, even if merely in a glimpse, of language as
writing, when the language of typology is not quite connected to the purpose of
communication. Edwards' definition of typology as a language turns out to be a
Trojan horse: instead of aiding explanation of his project, it undermines its very
intention.

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[39] Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," *Margins of Philosophy*,
trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 219-220.
[40] Paul de Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor," *Critical Inquiry* 5.1 (Fall 1978), 16.

The difficulties which have been noted and discussed here might serve, on the one hand, as a criticism of the shortcomings of Edwards' typological theory. Not only does Edwards' defense of his conception of natural typology as language fail to answer the issues raised by the problem of subjectivity, it creates even more difficulties for the project. Most importantly, Edwards' general understanding of language as a problematic medium of communication which can mislead men in thinking casts doubt on the very idea of typology conceived as language and undermines the promise of its alleged communicative and epistemological reliability.

On the other hand, perhaps, Edwards' failure to entirely convince posterity of the validity of his typological beliefs might be as much a recommendation of his thought as a criticism and make him newly interesting for the context of contemporary critical reflection. One might make it a criticism that he claimed that typology could possibly have objective rules and be safely kept apart from subjective allegorizing and failed. But one might also credit him for that failure, for in the process he has highlighted some deeper problems of language. Steeped in the many metaphors of his Christian metaphysics, Edwards made the arguments of his typological theory significantly ambiguous; his involvement with language was complex enough to prevent him, albeit in a rather paradoxical way, from a "thousand real mistakes" he might have made in mistaking the connections of words for the connections of ideas.

A b s t r a c t

Explaining his theory of typological understanding of nature, Edwards develops a metaphorical definition of typology as a language which the believer must carefully learn to speak. The metaphor of language turns out to be an interesting choice when it is placed in the context of his reflections on language, for Edwards' understanding is that it is in the very nature of language, even language regarding spiritual things, to sometimes thwart its goal, the communication of meaning. Such definition of typology complicates Edwards' project but also highlights issues which resonate with certain concerns of postmodern critical theory, such as Jacques Derrida's analysis of language, and so might help to make Edwards interesting for contemporary literary theoretical considerations.